

INSIDE



New Visitor Experience

With design adjustments and growing private-sector and philanthropic support, the project continues to move forward.

PAGE 3



Q&A: Monica Varner

The Rare Book and Special Collections Division collection manager aspired to work at the Library ever since she visited as a small child.

PAGE 4

Why I Give

Eboni Scurlock of the American Folklife Center discusses her participation in the Combined Federal Campaign.

PAGE 5

Benefits Open Season

Federal benefits open season began this week and will continue through Dec. 12.

PAGE 5



Mia Warren

Jeffrey Yoo Warren is the 2023 innovator in residence in LC Labs.

Innovator in Residence to Revisit Lost Neighborhoods

Now in its fifth year, the Innovator in Residence program connects with new audiences.

BY SAHAR KAZMI

When Providence, Rhode Island, artist and educator Jeffrey Yoo Warren discovered the neighborhood he lived in was once a bustling Chinatown, he decided to find a way to bring the district's forgotten history back to life. As the Library's 2023 innovator in residence, Yoo Warren will work with staff members and collections to develop an immersive 3D digital model of Providence's historical Chinatown that the public can experience directly through the web.

Yoo Warren's appointment comes

as the Digital Innovation Lab (LC Labs) in the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) celebrates its fifth anniversary. Since 2017, LC Labs has experimented with creative uses of the digital collections and researched the integration of emerging technologies like crowdsourcing and artificial intelligence with the Library's materials. The Innovator in Residence program was one of the first initiatives Labs launched.

Yoo Warren's work, "Seeing Lost Enclaves: Relational Reconstructions of Erased Historic Neighborhoods of Color," will combine

INNOVATOR, CONTINUED ON 6

NOTICES

DONATED TIME

The following employees have satisfied eligibility requirements to receive leave donations from other staff members. Contact Amy McAllister at amcallister@loc.gov.

Lynette Brown
Joselynn Fountain
Cherkea Howery

Wilbur King
Mary Lamb

MEDICAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE: JOIN THE TEAM

The Health Services Division is seeking volunteers to be part of the Library's medical emergency response team (MERT).

MERT members will receive training in American Heart Association cardiopulmonary resuscitation and automated defibrillator techniques; medical and psychological first aid, oxygen application, personal protection equipment and critical incident stress management. In addition, team members will learn to monitor medical emergencies, support public health medical countermeasure distribution and help those experiencing illness or injury.

The MERT teams on Capitol Hill and at Taylor Street are a dedicated group of volunteers who care about their colleagues' well-being. To learn more, contact Joe Nadzady, medical emergency coordinator, at jnadzady@loc.gov or (202) 707-4046.

NO GAZETTE ISSUE ON NOV. 25

The Gazette will not publish on Nov. 25 because of the federal Thanksgiving holiday. Publication will resume on Dec. 2.

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GAZETTE

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

loc.gov/staff/gazette

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MISSION OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Library's central mission is to engage, inspire and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.

ABOUT THE GAZETTE

An official publication of the Library of Congress, The Gazette encourages Library managers and staff to submit articles and photographs of general interest. Submissions will be edited to convey the most necessary information.

Back issues of The Gazette in print are available in the Communications Office, LM 143. Electronic archived issues and a color PDF file of the current issue are available online at loc.gov/staff/gazette.

GAZETTE WELCOMES LETTERS FROM STAFF

Staff members are invited to use the Gazette for lively and thoughtful debate relevant to Library issues. Letters must be signed by the author, whose place of work and telephone extension should be included so we can verify authorship. If a letter calls for management response, an explanation of a policy or actions or clarification of fact, we will ask for management response.—Ed.

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GAZETTE DEADLINES

The deadline for editorial copy for the Dec. 2 Gazette is Wednesday, Nov. 23.

Email editorial copy and letters to the editor to mhartsell@loc.gov and wmal@loc.gov.

To promote events through the Library's online calendar (www.loc.gov/loc/events) and the Gazette Calendar, email event and contact information to calendar@loc.gov by 9 a.m. Monday of the week of publication.

Boxed announcements should be submitted electronically (text files) by 9 a.m. Monday the week of publication to mhartsell@loc.gov and wmal@loc.gov.

Progress Continues on Plans for New Visitor Experience

Design adjustments and commitments from private partners move the project forward.

The Library of Congress continues to make progress in its plans to transform the experience of visitors to the iconic Thomas Jefferson Building on Capitol Hill.

Preparations are underway to create a new 8,600-square-foot orientation gallery that will immerse visitors in the Library's history, collections and purpose; a new treasures gallery will showcase some of the Library's most priceless treasures; and a new youth-centered space will engage younger visitors like never before.

With current gifts and commitments equaling \$19.48 million, the Library is on track to meet its goal of raising \$20 million in private funding for the plan in fiscal 2023. Private-sector and philanthropic support remains high for the Library's plan to revitalize and create new opportunities to engage with the Library and its collections, and the Library anticipates total giving will exceed \$20 million, as discussions with private partners progress.

The Library recently received the final design plans with associated budget and schedule requirements for the oculus feature proposed as a centerpiece of the orientation gallery. Several changes required during the construction design process resulted in a significantly less impactful and engaging outcome, including the addition of fire safety equipment that reduced the size of the oculus from a diameter of 24 feet to 16 feet.

At the same time, the cost for the feature escalated considerably, and the Architect of the Capitol estimated that its staff would require additional time to complete construction for the orientation gallery, based on the final oculus design plans.

The suboptimal design, significant increase in cost and unacceptable extension of the entire project's timeline led the Library to make the difficult decision to eliminate the oculus from the orientation center plans. The Library's leadership will move quickly to develop a new approach that will enhance the orientation gallery's design, while minimizing the budget and timeline impacts on the overall project.

While Library leaders are disappointed that the new orientation gallery will no longer provide visitors with the new and exciting perspective into the Main Reading Room that was initially envisioned, plans for a glass vestibule extending from the Great Hall entrance into the Main Reading Room for visitors will also move forward.

Additionally, Congress has expressed interest in exploring new ways to enable visitors to explore the Main Reading Room at certain limited times, with minimal impact to researchers. The reading room staff has successfully tested

that approach and will engage further with Congress to ensure that the American people are able to experience the inspiring Main Reading Room without significantly disrupting research.

Other preparations for the orientation gallery construction continue. The former control room and the central desk are no longer used to serve books to researchers in the Main Reading Room. Researcher requested books are now being served from Main Reading Room Alcove 7, just steps away from the reference desks. There is signage at the former central desk directing researchers to Alcove 7.

Behind the scenes, the Library Collections and Services Group has created new workflows to move materials from all parts of the Library to the Main Reading Room and has ensured that researchers are not inconvenienced. The former circulation room's book elevator and stairs will be removed during the construction of the new orientation gallery. ■

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Discover new learning opportunities at the Library

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Questions about LOC Learn?
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at clld@loc.gov.



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Monica Varner

Monica Varner is collections manager for the Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

Tell us about your background.

I grew up in Arlington, Virginia, and went to H-B Woodlawn Secondary Program (“Hippie High”) before heading down to Lynchburg, Virginia, to study art history at Randolph College. During college, I spent a year at Reading University in England.

On returning to the Washington, D.C., area, I enrolled in the museum studies master’s program at George Washington University. I interned at the National Museum of Women in the Arts and the Scottish Rite Temple in D.C., and I worked in various museum or library-adjacent jobs, including as a circulation manager at the public library system in Alexandria, Virginia.

My experiences in fine arts, archaeology, historic preservation, fashion history, exhibit design and collections management made working at the Library a natural fit – it’s all here.

What brought you to the Library, and what do you do?

I’ve wanted to work at the Library since I was very young. During an early, formative visit here with family, my aunt reports that I was furious that despite the Library reportedly having every book in the world, I, a small child, was not allowed to go into the stacks and start reading.

In 2018, I started with the Serial and Government Publications Division as a newspaper deck attendant and was introduced to the wild world of rare comic books, colonial newspapers and the mysteries of the overseas acquisition departments. I also used a microfilm reader for the first time.

The following year, I joined Rare Book and Special Collections, and I recently became collections manager for the division. I help organize and make room for incoming and outgoing special collections, monitor the environmental conditions of the stacks, answer reference questions and assist with special tours and displays of our material. Baby Monica would be thrilled to know I ended up here!

What are some of your standout projects?

I love helping plan themed displays using our material, such as a Disney Cinderella gala a couple of years ago and a recent class on the history of structure in architecture.

I’ve also slowly been organizing the division’s materials in a size-based system to maximize our stack space and improve storage conditions for the books. I’ve stumbled upon some great finds in that process. As a large public institution, the Library has become the final resting place for books from all over the world and from all different types of owners.

It’s fascinating to make connections across our material – for example, to learn that two books once in the same medieval monastery but dispersed after its dissolution ended up here together again after hundreds of years.

And any time someone finds a mysterious signature or stamp in a book, I pop up behind the researcher’s chair in the reading room to do some detective work. I love researching the people who read and used the books in our collections, especially children’s doodles.

During COVID, the division started recording videos about our collections, and I’ve enjoyed showcasing particularly interesting items in that way. The Multimedia Group has done an amazing job helping translate our research into this recorded format in an engaging way.

What do you enjoy doing outside work?

I just finished an October horror movie marathon we do annually in my home, and I’m almost done knitting a complex sweater vest (that I may or may not actually wear). Some friends and I meet once in a while for “Bad Book Club,” where we read goofy contemporary suspense novels.

My partner is an architectural historian, so during the summer I join him in Italy and help document 13th-century construction techniques. We both grew up in or near D.C. and enjoy walking around downtown seeing old sights in new ways. My dad was an architect, and I love visiting the buildings he worked on.

I also enjoy taking weekend trips in the area, visiting my family in the Pacific Northwest and hitting up yard sales and thrift stores to stock my ever-expanding cabinet of curiosities.

What is something your co-workers may not know about you?

I have never been pulled over and never used a card catalog until I worked at the Library. I also play the cello (but am way out of practice). ■

Federal Benefits Open Season

[Federal benefits open season](#)

began this week and will continue through Dec. 12. During this time, staff members can review their health, dental, vision and flexible-spending account options to decide which plans meet their needs for the upcoming year.

In 2023, 84 federal employee health benefit (FEHB) plans will charge higher premiums for self-plus-one enrollment versus self-and-family enrollment. In addition, some plans will cease to participate, while others will expand coverage, add options or change names in the FEHB program.

To ensure that your coverage still matches your needs, use the [FEHB plan comparison tool](#).

The Library will not host an in-person event this year for open season, but [virtual benefits fairs](#) will take place periodically throughout the season. [Register for a session](#) to review 2023 plan details, watch instructional videos and chat in real time with plan representatives.

The fairs will address questions about the federal dental and vision insurance program; federal employee health benefits; long-term care insurance and the federal flexible-spending account program.

Staff members can make changes to their health benefits on their [employee personal pages](#).

Changes to dental and vision plans can be made on the [BENEFEDS website](#). And changes to flexible-spending accounts can be made on the [FSAFeds website](#).

Questions? Visit the Human Capital Directorate portal or send an email to AskHCD@loc.gov. ■

Why I Donate to CFC

Eboni Scurlock, an administrative officer for the American Folklife Center and the Veterans History Project, discusses her participation in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC).

What inspires you to donate through CFC?

As an “adolescent” in the federal government (I’ve been a federal employee for fewer than five years), I learned about the CFC in 2019 when I was hired as the American Folklife Center’s administrative specialist. I volunteered that year to be a CFC keyworker. I learned so much about the CFC and the many ways federal workers can offer support, including through valuable time and monetary donations.

How do you decide which organizations to support?

I am one of those people who feels compelled to donate when my



Eboni Scurlock

heartstrings are pulled to a cause I can relate to. Because there are so many causes I love, it’s fortunate that there are so many ways available through the CFC to support more than one. It also helps that I can choose how and how much to donate so I can feel good about giving and stay within the confines of my personal budget.

Do you have any advice for potential donors?

I believe in giving from your heart, always! If your heart moves you to give, and that includes giving your time because time also has value, then follow your heart. It will not lead you astray. ■

TRIBAL ASSOCIATION HONORS HARJO



Shawn Miller

The Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries and Museums has presented one of its most significant awards to the Library and former U.S. Poet Laureate Joy Harjo for “[Living Nations, Living Words](#),” Harjo’s signature project during her term. An enrolled member of the Muscogee Nation, Harjo was the nation’s first Native American poet laureate. [Read more](#).

INNOVATOR, CONTINUED FROM 1

photos, maps, film and other materials from the Library's collections with the latest in spatial reconstruction techniques to create a virtual 3D model of Providence's Chinatown from 100 years ago. Yoo Warren will also explore archival materials to develop a second reconstruction of an erased Chinatown from another part of the country.

"Similarly lost neighborhoods exist all across America, from Chinatowns in San Jose, California, and Denver to small cities like Truckee, California," Yoo Warren said, adding that his project "will allow for a reinterpretation and reclaiming of the archive as a space for unearthing ancestral stories."

Yoo Warren's effort will use historical street maps to overlay spatially reconstructed building locations onto today's city streetscapes, as well as image editing to re-create three-dimensional building facades from archival photos and video. To add atmosphere, he plans to experiment with multisensory elements like virtual weather and soundscapes and prototype augmented reality and virtual reality presentation styles.

The complete effect will be of a "visitable" Chinatown full of architecturally accurate shops and restaurants audiences can wander through virtually.

This particular historic re-creation method, which Yoo Warren calls relational reconstruction, centers on using art and technology to foster personal relationships with the historical knowledge many communities have been cut off from.

"I hope to create an immersive encounter through spatial and sensory reconstruction, which will allow audiences to more personally experience what it would have felt like to stand in the heart of Providence's Chinatown and other similar enclaves," he said.

Yoo Warren's relational reconstruction practices offer a chance

for the Library to be in close dialogue with its audiences. Through workshops, public outreach and other engagement activities, "Seeing Lost Enclaves" will incorporate community-building events that help reshape and add to existing interpretations of archival materials.

Another major component of the effort, the "Relational Reconstruction Toolkit," will provide the public with training materials to help support community reimagining work for other historically erased spaces.

Although organized to engage Asian American community members as well as artists and scholars with technical knowledge, insights from the toolkit will help researchers from a variety of disciplines use Library materials to enrich their own historical neighborhood modeling.

Past innovators in residence have identified as data artists, computer scientists, mixed-media artists, teachers and writers, each bringing a unique "imagine if" scenario to the Library.

The first innovator, Jer Thorp, created a podcast and experimented with MARC records. In 2020, Brian Foo and Benjamin Lee used machine learning techniques to develop Citizen DJ (Foo) and Newspaper Navigator (Lee). Most recently, artist Courtney McClellan created Speculative Annotation, a digital note-making application for K-12 students.

"Even though this program is only 5 years old, it has already been incredibly impactful in our mission to connect to all Americans," Jaime Mears, a senior innovation specialist in LC Labs, said. "By bringing their personal dreams for what the Library could be into reality,

the innovators inspire us, demonstrating ways of introducing our institution to new communities and expanding how we see ourselves."

With "Seeing Lost Enclaves," the Labs team is eager to build even more internal Library engagement into the Innovator in Residence program. As always, the innovator will work closely with OCIO technical experts and the Library's curatorial units. However, because community research and participation are key to Yoo Warren's relational reconstruction work, staff collaboration will be vital to the effort.

Those who would like to learn more about 3D methods, are curious about place-based digital research or have interest or expertise in Asian American history are encouraged to get involved with the team's work.

A staff information page on Confluence is now available to document benchmarks and other milestones for "Seeing Lost Enclaves," and the team will share monthly updates and additional content as the effort continues. LC Labs and Yoo Warren will also begin hosting monthly virtual office hours for staff members to ask questions and converse as their work progresses.

"Place and personal memory are such important parts of our collective heritage, especially for communities that have not always seen their histories represented prominently in the traditional archives," Mears said. "Jeffrey's work offers us powerful potential to use our scope as the national library to help communities all over the country embody their own stories with the Library's place-based archives." ■

NEW EMAIL ADDRESS FOR HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION

To contact the Health Services Division (HSD) for issues not related to COVID, send an email to healthservices@loc.gov. This address replaces the division's former address. HSD is also available by phone at (202) 707-8035.

Continue to send emails to HSDCOVID-check-in@loc.gov to report any symptoms or COVID exposures.